

**For information
on 2 October 2002**

LegCo Panel on Food Safety and Environmental Hygiene

Situation Report on Dengue Fever in Hong Kong

Purpose

This paper presents the dengue situation and control strategy in Hong Kong.

Background

2. Dengue fever is a viral illness transmitted by the bite of infective mosquito. It is not directly transmitted from person to person. There is no effective vaccine.

3. In Hong Kong, dengue fever has been made statutorily notifiable since 1994. Between 1994 and 2001, the annual number of notifications ranged from 3 – 17 cases; all these cases acquired the infection from outside Hong Kong (i.e. imported cases), mostly from South East Asian countries. In 2002, as at 30 Sep 2002, there were 26 confirmed cases, including 13 imported cases and 13 local cases. There have not been any fatal cases reported.

4. The strategy for control of dengue fever comprises:

- Early case detection, prompt treatment and laboratory confirmation
- Epidemiological surveillance
- Entomological surveillance and focal vector control measures
- Regular territory-wide anti-mosquito campaigns to eliminate breeding sites and encourage community participation
- Community publicity efforts to educate the general public to adopt preventive measures

- Health advice to travellers on the prevention of mosquito bites and the awareness of the symptoms of dengue fever.

5. On vector control, regular inspections and disinfestations works are carried out by FEHD throughout the year. We also monitor closely the breeding of *Aedes albopictus*, the mosquito vector which is capable of transmitting dengue fever virus, in the territory so as to adjust our mosquito control strategy when necessary. The effective control of mosquito problem requires collaborated efforts of the whole community. Anti-mosquito campaign is therefore organized on a territory-wide basis annually to encourage community participation and to promote concerted efforts of various government departments in mosquito prevention and control work.

6. The 2002 anti-mosquito campaign is conducted in three phases starting from April 2002. We have briefed members on the details of the campaign vide LC Paper No. CB(2) 1615/01-02(06) at the Panel meeting held in April. In addition to the intensified inspection and disinfestations works, we make use of a wide range of promotional channels to encourage community participation in our campaign as well as organizing various activities to arouse people's awareness and to give them useful advice on how to prevent mosquito problems. (Details are found in the press releases attached.)

Local Dengue Cases

7. The first local dengue fever case was confirmed on 21 Sep 2002, and subsequent investigation by the DH confirmed that the source of infection was in Ma Wan. Through active case finding among the workers and residents in Ma Wan, hotline enquiries and hospital notifications, further cases related to Ma Wan were identified. As at 30 Sep 2002, there were a total of 12 cases related to Ma Wan, including 8 workers and 4 residents.

8. On 29 Sep 2002, dengue fever was confirmed in a patient who has neither gone to Ma Wan nor travelled outside Hong Kong during the incubation period. Investigation for the source of infection in the latest

local case is still on-going.

9. For all the notified cases, investigation and mosquito control work are conducted by FEHD and DH jointly.

Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Dengue Fever

10. In 2001, the DH set up the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Dengue Fever to keep under review the prevention and control strategies. In view of the detection of the first local case, the Interdepartmental Coordinating Committee on Dengue Fever decided to strengthen the governmental efforts in territory-wide mosquito control measures in response to the local dengue fever outbreak. The measures focused on the elimination of mosquito breeding sites, promotion of public awareness and preventive measures and community participation. (Details are found in the press releases attached.)

Conclusion

11. For effective control of mosquito-borne diseases, we need the support of the community to take heed of vector control measures. We call on members of the public to join momentum to guard against dengue fever by taking proactive measures against mosquito breeding so as to avoid contracting the disease and prevent the spread of the disease.

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